

Connevens Limited @ 50!

As Connevens Limited celebrates its 50th Anniversary, Laura Evans gives us a history of a family company.

Connevens Limited was founded on 7th November 1961 and derives its name from Connie & Meurig Evans – my grandparents. Back then, Connevens was the first UK company to manufacture Language Teaching Laboratories, with installations all over the world; from Africa, to the Caribbean; South Wales to Venezuela. The late 1960s saw the business diversify into equipment for deaf people and, in 1969, Connevens designed the Auditory Trainer Unit specifically for use by deaf students. When funds to purchase language laboratories disappeared in the recession of the 1980s, Connevens

accelerated into production the first Connevens Radio Aid system. Our successful Radio Aid systems have seen many improvements since 1980, including the launch in 2000 of the fmGenie which continues to be a firm favourite in many schools.



CRM100

The company was founded on technical expertise and today, Connevens maintains its manufacturing base with products being designed and manufactured in our UK factory – a rare feat nowadays. We have also recently expanded production capabilities to allow for increasing demand of IR classroom soundfield systems. Our technical background allows us to provide specialist support and professional on-site service & repair facilities. We pride ourselves on manufacturing products built to last, so for any Connevens-manufactured items we guarantee to support the product for a minimum of 8 years – helping prolong the life span of the product and improving sustainability.

It is interesting, looking back at the progression of the company over the years, to see how we have come full circle while remaining faithful to the same central ethos. Meurig developed the language laboratories knowing that a good listening environment was key to effective learning. Now, in 2011, this is the central concept behind our Classroom Soundfield Systems.



Language laboratory in the mid 1970s



Laura Evans, David Evans & Mary Cann – taken in the new boardroom at Bridge House, by the portraits of founders Meurig and Connie Evans.



fmGenie



Classroom soundfield for the new millennium

From the beginning, Connevens has always tried to embrace the very latest technology and this is even more the case in our 50th year. At our 25th birthday, we were proud to have “at least one computer for every two members of staff” – a major feat in 1986. Since then we have invested heavily in our computer infrastructure and expanding our website – www.DeafEquipment.co.uk which is now the UK’s most comprehensive online shop for deaf and hard of hearing people!

The company still enjoys a strong family atmosphere, where David Evans and Mary Cann, son and younger daughter of founders Meurig & Connie Evans, lead the management team. They were joined in 2006 by David’s daughter (me!),

fresh from university. As Special Projects Manager I mastermind our website (among other things) and have even persuaded my Dad onto Facebook! We recently oversaw the company’s move to a new factory in Merstham, after 24 years at the Albert Road North site in Reigate. Bridge House, our new building, is bright and modern – much more suited to the Connevens of today. David, Mary & I all have neighbouring desks in our customer services department and despite working so closely, we’ve not had a family feud yet!



Dorking, 1963



Bridge House, Merstham, 2010

Indeed, the family feel spreads from the Evanses throughout the company. Going through the list of staff we produced at our 40th Birthday, there are many familiar faces. It is clear, looking at the joining dates, that the company longevity has been supported by and reflected in our staff loyalty. Ken Robinson, our Production Supervisor who joined the company when he was only 17 years old has now notched up a grand 44 years service. What’s more, he’s not alone – we are proud to have nearly half our staff with a service record that goes back at least 20 years!!

With all this experience, it’s not surprising that Connevens has a reputation of excellent customer service and support. We maintain the company policy of direct involvement of the directors and managers to answer customer questions which, combined with the dedication of the staff team, ensures the highest possible quality of response. In this world of large faceless corporate conglomerates, we’re still a fiercely independent company with a human face. To paraphrase the old adage, with us ‘It’s not *just* business, it’s personal’.

Laura Evans